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ABSTRACT

The procedure for setting educational goals described in this booklet, the first of three, is based on the belief that only through a school-community partnership can the best solutions be found and supported. It is also based on the belief that goal setting can proceed only after local needs are known. The booklet outlines in considerable detail a community conference in which groups consider things that are keeping the school from doing the job it should do for the students and things the school should be doing for the students. Procedures discussed include setting up the conference, forming groups and obtaining input statements from them, sorting and refining the statements, and presenting the statements in the form of goals to boards of education. (Author/MLF)

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY:

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

(Second Edition)

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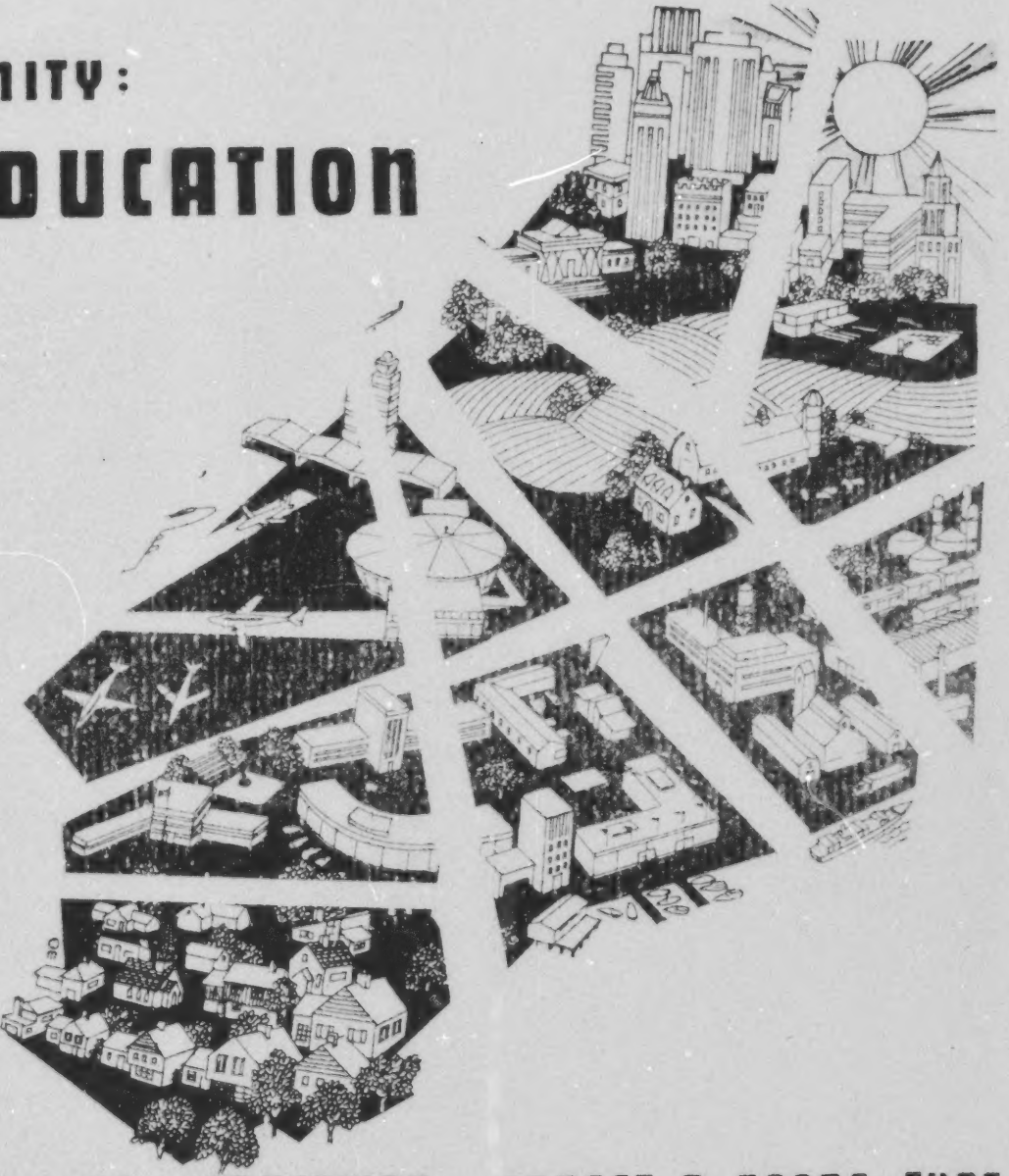

FRESNO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ERNEST A. POORE, SUPT.

THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY:
PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

A Way to Determine Needs and Set Goals

Fresno County Department of Education
Fresno, California
Ernest A. Poore, Superintendent
January 1972 - First Edition
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THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY:

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Bob King, Ed.D., First Edition
Wayne N. Jordan, Ed.D., Second Edition

Fresno County Department of Education
Fresno, California
Ernest A. Poore, Superintendent

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FOREWORD

An extensive search is currently under way for the best methods to do SOMETHING about the many problems facing education.

Dwindling resources, a lack of clear-cut goals, a lessening of public confidence and a rapidly changing world all make the search for a better way an urgent one.

Many procedures for setting goals have been tried and some have brought good results. Some of the procedures have produced goal statements which are "in the clouds" and which approach the status of the eternal verities. Other procedures have produced goal statements which are practical, readable, and are readily understood by students, school staffs and communities, even though they may lack technical excellence.

The procedure described in this booklet is one of the latter. It is, we believe, in full accord with the philosophy of the California State Legislature's Joint Committee on Goals and Evaluation.

The COMMUNITY CONFERENCE is based upon the belief that only through a school-community partnership can the best solutions be found and supported. It is also based on the belief that goal setting can proceed only after local needs are known.

The COMMUNITY CONFERENCE served early in the history of the United States as a forum for the exchange of ideas. The COMMUNITY CONFERENCE can again serve as a meeting place for the great diversity of ideas about what our schools should be doing and how they should go about it.

Those who participate in school-community meetings will have had their say and they will have made a commitment to the success of the educational venture. Those with complaints about their school will have had their opportunity to express their feelings. Those with responsible ideas will have had their input. Every participant will have been heard. And what is said WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

The COMMUNITY CONFERENCE has been tried and has brought exciting results.

We hope it may be of service to your school.

Credit is due Dr. Bob King, former Director of Elementary Education, who conceived, authored, and piloted the process as one element of his dynamic leadership.

Wayne N. Jordan

FRESNO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
1973

PART I - OVERVIEW

WHAT HAPPENS AT A COMMUNITY CONFERENCE? (A brief description)

The entire community has been invited to participate. The Steering Committee has issued personal invitations. The entire community has been made aware of the coming of the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE.

On a Saturday morning, or at another time convenient for the community, one hundred or more persons gather at the school cafeteria for an opportunity to exchange their ideas, their dissatisfactions, their feelings about their school. Participants sit in groups of about six persons -- wherever they wish and with whomever they wish.

There is a brief period of introductions and instructions and the groups get down to work. A large piece of paper and a colored crayon or flow pen are the major tools to be used. Each of the groups responds in writing to the question, *"What are the things that are keeping our school from doing the job it should do for the students?"*

The groups work for about 30 minutes on the question, then their papers are exchanged with those of other groups -- usually with as many as five other groups. Each group rates the comments of other groups and offers suggestions -- all in writing.

The originating groups receive their own papers back -- loaded with comments, scores and modifications. The originating groups then rewrite their comments and assign priorities on cards which are then placed in categories.

Three hours will have passed at this point and it's time for a break (lunch, if an all-day meeting, and adjournment, if an evening meeting).

The groups reconvene for the second session and sit wherever they like, provided the groups do not exceed six persons. Each of the groups responds in writing to the question, *"What should your school be doing for the students?"* This question is supplemented by the following: *"When students graduate from the school:*

What knowledge should they have?
What skills should they have?
What kinds of attitudes should they have?"

The same "round robin" procedure for exchanging papers will be followed at this session. Originating groups will then rewrite their comments and assign priorities on cards which will then be placed in categories.

WHAT HAPPENS TO ALL OF THIS INFORMATION?

Several hundred ideas will have been expressed and placed upon cards by originating groups. The sifting and synthesizing of this information will be the responsibility of the Steering Committee. The technique to be used is a modification of the Delphi Method.

The cards will have been placed into rough categories by the originating groups. The Committee will refine the card sorts and extract a series of statements about what needs to be done. The priorities which have been assigned by the originating groups will help the Committee determine the priorities to be assigned to the various needs. The listing of needs is then carefully examined to avoid duplications and any distortions of ideas.

The Steering Committee then converts the statements of need to goal statements.

The Committee next decides upon a format for the goal statements and the method of presenting the statement to the school board. The school board then makes the decision to accept or reject the statement. If the statement is accepted, the school board issues instructions for the implementation of the goals.

WHY GO INTO ALL THIS ANYWAY?

This is a question that deserves answers. It has been asked by concerned educators, legislators, parents and students.

Here are some of the answers:

1. Public confidence in education appears to be at an all-time low.

2. We are nearly all convinced that education is not doing the job it should do, but we are not sure what should be done about it.

3. Solutions which work for one school or district may not be at all appropriate for another school or district.

4. Resources (money, staffs, equipment, buildings) are dwindling and needs are increasing. Schools must do more and more with less and less.

5. There MUST be a better way of doing things -- society is changing and schools must at least keep up -- if not lead the way.

6. Systematic problem solving starts with assessing needs and setting goals.

7. The County Superintendents have been delegated the responsibility to implement goal-setting for California schools -- why not get at it?

8. New legislation has prescribed the linking of student achievement and the evaluation of staff performance. The need for a clear-cut statement of anticipated student outcomes makes a foundation of educational goals a necessity.

WHERE DO WE START?

The setting of school or district goals starts at home -- within the school attendance area and its community. One doesn't just adopt a selection of goals from a list offered by "experts." Some of the lists of goals offered are technically proper, well worded, general but are of little help to a school.

So we start with what are felt to be the problems and shortcomings of the local school. Now school staffs and the people of the community can talk -- not about abstractions, but about real matters that affect their own children.

Beginning with problems and shortcomings of a school might sound like a terrible way to start talking about where education should go in our community, but it works! Nearly everyone has an axe or two to grind, but once the invitation to sound off is made and the concerns are all listed, good things begin to happen.

But even before the people of the community participate in force, there are a few first steps that must be taken . . .

The needs assessment/goal-setting process should be done school site by school site. So a schedule of COMMUNITY CONFERENCES for each school site should be developed and announced. This recommendation is based upon experience of the authors but the same procedure is suggested by the Joint Legislative Committee on Goals and Evaluation.

The authors further recommend that a principal not conduct his own study. In a district with several school sites it is recommended that principal A conduct the study at School B. There are two basic reasons for this recommendation: (1) the conference leader needs to be a person who can be and will be perceived by others as being objective throughout the study; and (2) the process does have a number of timed steps and the enforcement of these time limitations is done better by a person not having a day-by-day responsibility at the school site.

WHO MAKES THE FIRST COMMITMENT?

As is often the case, the school staff, usually represented by the administrator, takes the first step and introduces the idea of goal-setting for the district.

Next, the school board either accepts or rejects the idea. An essential element of school board acceptance is a commitment to change in the way things are done if the resultant study indicates a need for change -- as it is almost sure to do.

Then, a project director is named. The director may be an administrator or other staff member or a member of the community who has the organizing ability, time and enthusiasm for the project.

Once the staff and school board and the project director fully understand and accept responsibility for goal-setting, you're on the way!

LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE NEEDED -- WHO SELECTS THEM?

THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE STEERING COMMITTEE

The school board and the administrative staff nominate persons who are representative of the entire community. The entire committee may be named, or it may be deemed best to nominate only a small group and permit this group to augment itself.

A committee of 24 to 30 persons is recommended. A large committee will have wider community contacts, assuring a broader base of communications. The board and administration naming 8 to 10 persons or 1/3 of the total is also recommended. Then ask each of the 8 to 10 to procure two more people.

Some recommendations for membership: Students, recent graduates, faculty, parents, non-parents, business men, members of churches, service clubs, PTA, those who like the school, those who don't and any others whose ideas will be of value. Special effort should be made to assure representation of all racial, ethnic, socio-economic or other groups within the community.

You may still be accused of stacking the deck, so seriously consider the addition of a loyal and not-so-loyal opposition of the committee.

THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

Persons for the Community Conference should be selected by the Steering Committee since the committee has responsibility for good representation. An open invitation should also be extended to the community-at-large.

YOUR SELECTION SHOULD ASSURE:

Enthusiastic participation (people who really care)

Knowledgeable participation (people who know the school and community)

Continuing participation (people who will maintain interest)

Representative participation (people representing all facets of the community -- racial, economic, religious, geographic, age groups)

HOW LONG WILL THE PROJECT TAKE?

If the project is not interrupted by vacations or too many holidays, it is quite possible to move through Phases I through V in four to six weeks. Phase VI will take longer, depending upon the Needs and Goals developed during the study.

This paper is primarily concerned with Phases I through V. Projects completed to date have required the following time commitments:

School Board	2 hours
Community-at-large (The Community Conference)	5 hours
Steering Committee	12-15 hours
Administrative staff and/or project director	20-30 hours
Consultants	40-60 hours

Some persons may serve in more than one of the above capacities. If so, their hours would be increased correspondingly.

PART II - THE FLOW CHART

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE FLOW CHART

You will find a Flow Chart on the next page. It is suggested that you follow it while scanning the rest of the booklet.

This Flow Chart describes the process to be used when a SCHOOL/DISTRICT wishes to use the concept of a Community Conference in its study.

THE FLOW CHARTS -- PHASE I -- PRELIMINARY

The initial stimulus may come from the staff, the board, the community or the students. But no matter who may have started it all, the board must make the go or no-go decision.

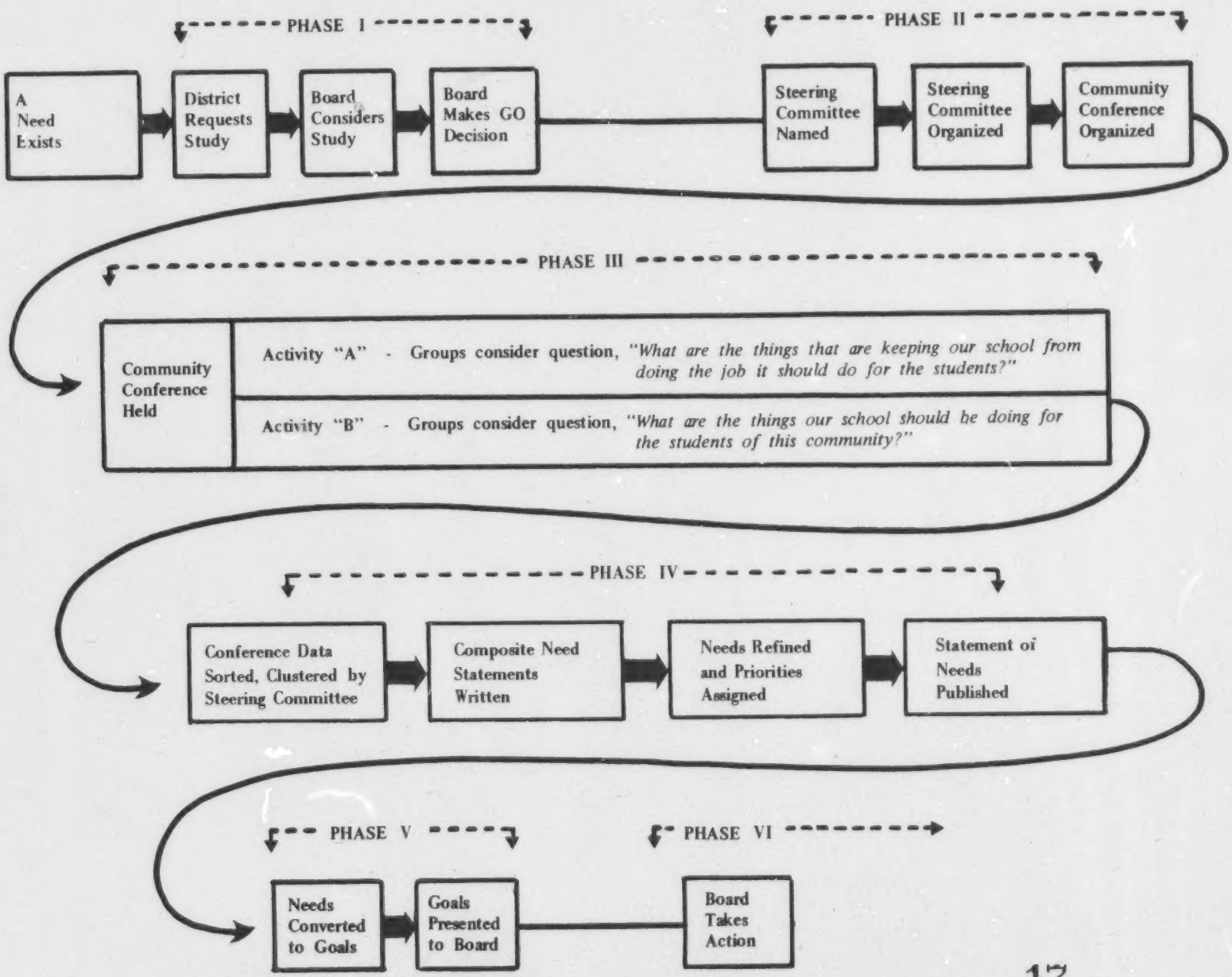
If the decision is go, the board must also make a commitment to make changes if a need for change is indicated by the study. The results of the study will be presented to the board by a citizen-chairman. Care should be exercised about revisions of the goals by the board or administrators.

There must be complete understanding of personal and organizational commitments, the time that must be devoted to the study and the purposes of the study.

It is desirable for the consultants or project director to meet with the board and answer their questions during Phase I and before the go/no-go decision is made. The entire study model should be displayed and described so that there will be no misunderstandings and so that board members may be in a position to reassure the hesitant and answer questions that may be directed to them.

Of course, the school staff should be kept fully informed of all developments. They need to know that the faculty is a part of the process; that their enthusiasm and objectivity will greatly enhance the process. The school staff should also be reminded that "input information" will not always be correct or accurate. However, the status of feelings or opinions of the citizens is worthy information.

FLOW CHART - USED IN STUDIES WITH THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE


PHASE I
PHASE II
A Need Exists
District Requests Study
Board Considers Study
Board Makes GO Decision
Steering Committee Named
Steering Committee Organized
Community Conference Organized
PHASE III
Community Conference Held
Activity "A" - Groups consider question, "What are the things that are keeping our school from doing the job it should do for the students?"
Activity "B" - Groups consider question, "What are the things our school should be doing for the students of this community?"
PHASE IV
Conference Data Sorted, Clustered by Steering Committee
Composite Need Statements Written
Needs Refined and Priorities Assigned
Statement of Needs Published
PHASE V
PHASE VI
Needs Converted to Goals
Goals Presented to Board
Board Takes Action

THE FLOW CHARTS -- PHASE II -- ORGANIZATION

These are jobs to be done during this phase:

1. The school board and administration establish criteria for and nominate members for the Steering Committee. Invitations are sent to prospective members. A committee of 24-30 members is recommended. See details on page 5.

2. The project director finalizes plans for the study.

3. The Steering Committee organizes the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE. The COMMUNITY CONFERENCE will function for one day only (or two evenings). Steering Committee members should plan to participate in the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE in order that they may be able to better interpret data gathered. There should be no fewer than 60 persons at the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE, unless the school is a very small one. There is no top limit as long as there are tables available.

THE FLOW CHARTS -- PHASE III -- DATA GATHERING

These are jobs to be done during this phase:

1. The Board of Education and the Steering Committee call the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE. An open invitation is extended to all persons in the community to participate. Steering Committee members assume responsibility for assuring a large and representative group by personal contacts and by procuring commitments to attend.

2. The COMMUNITY CONFERENCE is held. The conference is conducted by the project director or consultants, assisted by the administration and the Steering Committee. See Part III for details.

3. A date following the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE should be set for the Steering Committee's processing of the data gathered. One evening of 3 1/2 hours will be sufficient if the full committee participates.

4. A date should be projected for the presentation to the Board of Education. Ask the superintendent for a place on the agenda of a regular meeting in the near future.

THE FLOW CHARTS -- PHASE IV -- THE STATEMENT OF NEEDS

These are the jobs to be done during this phase:

1. The Steering Committee considers the cards as sorted during the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE.

    a. Sorts are refined. See Part IV for full details.

    b. Composite statements are written, beginning with the words, *"There is a need for . . ."*

    c. Priority ratings are recorded.

    d. Statements are read and refined.

    e. Priority scores are assigned.

2. Needs are recorded in priority order.

3. The needs statement is published.

THE FLOW CHARTS -- PHASE V -- THE GOALS STATEMENT

These are the jobs to be done during this phase:

1. The project director conducts a brief course on school or school district goals for the members of the Steering Committee. The Education Code's definition of a goal should be closely examined for its basic meaning and its necessary elements:

   A. WHO -- The subject of your goal sentence: the school by name, the students of ____ school, the staff of _____ school, the Board of _____ school district, the community or parents of _____ school, etc..

   B. WILL DO WHAT -- The desired process to be implemented; the general expectation for students; a desired improvement; etc.. As much as possible, a goal should avoid stating a solution and detailing the tasks.

   C. WHY -- This is the important "closure" or ending statement of a goal. Although the reason for the goal may be obvious, the WHY statement focuses the WHAT and is a great assistance in determining the objectives, the activities, and the evaluation.

2. Needs are converted to goals.

3. Determination is made whether or not goals are to be placed in priority order.

4. Goals are presented to the Board.

5. The Steering Committee is thanked and disbanded.

THE FLOW CHARTS -- PHASE VI -- PROBLEM SOLVING

Full responsibility for actions in this Phase belong to the school board and the administration.

The board may, at its option, name necessary committees to help bring about changes indicated by the statement of goals.

The maintenance of communications is absolutely essential so that the community is fully aware of what is happening and why it is happening. The community has made an investment of its time in the study to date and will have an increased interest in what happens.

It is recommended that the problem solving cycle suggested on the flow chart on page 32 be followed as closely as possible. Consultant help may be needed for those unfamiliar with the technique.

If you've gotten this far, you are about to accomplish more than most school districts -- now, carry through to completion and a better educational offering!

THE FLOW CHARTS -- PHASE VII -- ACCOUNTABILITY

The school is now prepared for:

1. Full accountability. You know where you stand. The staff knows better what is expected. You have a targets. You have stated your intentions. The community has committed itself.

2. Orderly entry into program evaluation. You can now give a great deal more detail about the school's success. You have made the first, and most important steps.

3. Continuing self-evaluation. You have opened the door to the community. You have established a procedure for communications. You have found some local sources of help and support. You have established a technique for continuing examination of your contributions. Don't let it stop here!

4. Greater efficiency in operation. You have found out what it really means to use hard facts for decision-making. You will learn the value and benefits of making desired outcomes known before the evaluation and not after.

5. Greater relevance in educational offerings. Goal setting and proceeding through the problem solving cycle will have introduced you to new ideas which may be adapted for local use. In brainstorming solutions, you may have devised some entirely new ways to do a better job.

6. Better education for the children of the school. No question about it -- you have sensed a dissatisfaction and you have taken some positive and orderly action to do something about it. Congratulations!!

PART III -- THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

The participants:

The community-at-large, including members of the Steering Committee.

The project director.

School administrators or other persons to assist with physical arrangements.

An assistant to help with supplies and answering questions among the tables.

The consultant or consultants.

Those providing the lunch.

The place: Any large room, such as a cafeteria, where persons may work around tables in groups of five or six. If necessary, more than one room can be used, but this should be avoided if at all possible. A gymnasium is a good alternative if the floor can be protected adequately.

The time: Any day when a large and representative group of persons may be assembled. Saturdays have proved to be best so far.

The Conference should start at 9:00 a.m. sharp, with a one hour break at noon. The afternoon session usually takes less time because it becomes unnecessary to give such detailed directions after the groups gain experience. Estimated time: 9:00 to 2:00 p.m.

In some communities it may be necessary to call the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE for two evenings. A special effort must be made to assure the return of the same group for the second evening.

Why serve lunch? Lunch served as a part of the Conference has many advantages:

1. It helps to make it a sociable and more pleasant experience.
2. It keeps the participants on the premises and precludes dropping out.
3. It makes it more possible to start the afternoon session on time.
4. It is an opportunity for service for a school-related organization.
5. The idea is consistent with the concept of school and community partnership -- which is what the whole thing is all about.

Supplies and equipment needed:

1. 20 or more cafeteria-type tables with 6 chairs at each.
2. A public address system.
3. Paper for sign-up sheets.
4. A number on each of the tables.
5. About 400 cards (5 x 8)
6. A supply of butcher paper cut into 4 foot lengths. (At least three (3) sheets per table.)
7. One large primary-type crayon or colored flow pen at each table. Neighboring tables should have different colors.
8. Two rolls of masking tape.
9. A supply of pencils.
10. Two (2) tables without chairs for the card sort. These may be placed at the front, back, or middle of the room.
11. An overhead projector and screen which all participants can see.

PART III -- THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE (Continued)

The setup: Tables are in place, chairs in place, sheet of butcher paper, one large crayon or flow pen and a sign-up sheet which can be routed. The public address system is centrally located so that all participants can see and hear the speaker. The screen (elevated, if possible) is immediately behind the microphone. The supplies are in a corner of the room or on the stage.

DETAILED AGENDA FOR THE MEETING

As participants enter the room they should be invited to sit wherever they wish and with whomever they wish, but groups should not exceed five in number, leaving an empty chair for late arrivals.

1. Welcome by the administrator or board representative.

2. Introduction of the project director and those who will conduct the meeting.

3. Director explains the purpose of the meeting and gives brief preview of what will happen.

4. Question A is projected so all may see it. The question is: *"What are the things that are keeping our school from doing the job it should do for the students?"*

5. Groups receive the following instructions:

> *"You will have about 40 minutes for the first part of the work. Write your answers to this question on the butcher paper. Write large and rapidly. The important thing is to get as many ideas as possible on the paper. Be sure every member of your group has his ideas on the paper. Please place your group number somewhere on the paper."*

While this is under way, the leader will circulate around the room to be sure groups are responding to the question and not offering solutions (a great temptation). Some groups are slow to start and may need a shove. School staff members should not look over shoulders of participants. The leader also makes brief notes on the major items listed, for future reference -- this information will be used for a card sort later.

6. After most groups appear to have exhausted their ideas -- usually about 40 minutes later:

"You will soon receive a paper from another group. Examine it carefully and then place one of the following priority scores with your crayon after each of the statements."

The leader or an assistant then projects a listing of the priority ratings:

A. Utmost importance
B. Very important
C. Moderately important
D. Of little importance
E. Unimportant

"Feel free to write comments of your own on another group's paper if you disagree or wish to add anything. For the first time you must reach agreement in your group for the ratings, comments, or revisions."

"Don't spend too long on any one item or you will not get the task completed within the time allotment. Your initial reaction to a statement is probably the most reliable."

"Now, please pass your paper to the next higher numbered group. Group 20 (or highest in group), send yours to Group 1."

PART III -- THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE (Continued)

7. As soon as the majority of the groups have completed assigning the priorities (usually after about 20 minutes for the first time) announce that they have three more minutes to complete this job.

8. When all or nearly all have completed the above:

   "Now pass this paper on to the same table as you did before. When you have received this butcher paper, proceed to assign priorities and comment as you did with the first paper. If you receive a paper upon which all items have not been rated, please start with those."

9. After about 15 minutes, give a 3-minute warning.

10. When nearly all have finished, instruct groups to move the papers on as they have been doing. Some lists may be considerably longer than others. If groups are having difficulty completing longer lists, instruct some groups to start at the bottom of a longer listing to assure some rankings and comments on all items. Papers should be moved five (5) times so that each group will have placed priorities on the work of five (5) other groups. Each will take a little less time than the last.

11. When all groups have assigned priorities to the work of 5 other groups:

    "You will receive your own paper back in a few moments and will be able to see how others have reacted to your ideas about the problems facing your school. They may have written some comments on your paper."

    "Look over your own statements and the comments and priority ratings assigned by the others. You will then rewrite your statements on 5 x 8 cards (an assistant will distribute about 25 cards to each group) *with one statement per card. Place your group number at the top of the card, then write the comment the long way in the center of the card, then place your own priority at the bottom of the card."*

    Project a transparency showing format for the 5 x 8 cards.

"You need not accept the priorities or comments of the other groups, but their reactions will tell you if they have misunderstood your ideas as written."

"Be sure to write a card on any matter which concerns you. Whether or not a subject becomes part of the eventual statement which will be developed from the information you are supplying today depends upon the number of times the subject is mentioned and the priorities assigned. If you saw a comment that was written by another group and with which you strongly agree, your group should also comment."

12. Instruct the groups to return the papers to their originators and proceed to rewrite comments on the cards.

    (Philosophical question: If we don't have to consider the ratings of the other groups and we may place our own priority rating on the card, why do we exchange papers? The exchanging of papers is (1) a way of having dialogue among the tables, and (2) a means of learning how a portion of the total group feels about your statements and their clarity.)

13. As groups start this job, the leader then sets a series of small placecards on one or two tables in the front of the room. Each placecard represents one of the major topics the leader listed as he toured the room during the first writing on the butcher papers. See page 23 for some examples.

PART III -- THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE (Continued)

14. As soon as the small signs are posted:

> *"As soon as you have completed the writing of a few of your cards, have one member of your group bring the cards to the front of the room and find a classification into which your comment will fit. If you do not readily find a classification that fits, please place your card in the 'Not Sure' pile."*
>
> *"When your cards are all written and placed in classifications, please get some tape and hang your butcher paper on the wall so that other groups may see what you have said. Then get ready for lunch, which will be served at _____. We'll start again approximately one hour after the last group has its paper on the wall."*

15. Luncheon is served.

16. Administrator or leader then thanks those who prepared the lunch and makes any other necessary comments. Then work starts again.

17. The morning procedure is repeated, but with Question B: *"What are the things our school should be doing for the students?"*

    The question should be projected, along with the following:

> *Be sure to consider:*
>
> *Knowledge students should gain*
> *Skills students should gain*
> *Attitudes students should have*
> *Comments you made this morning*

Emphasize that we are particularly concerned about learning, student achievement, and educational expectations. Remind them of the subjects that the students' are taking. What do they want them to learn?

PART III -- THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE (Continued)

18. It's a good idea to circulate the papers in the other direction during the second half of the day. This encourages a fresh approach.

19. The circulated papers are returned to their tables of origination and statements are rewritten on 5 x 8 cards with group's own rating.

20. The 5 x 8 cards are placed in the same classifications as before. Placing them with the morning cards is no problem.

21. Dismiss the group with thanks. They will receive a copy of the needs and goals statements and will be kept informed of future actions. Their participation WILL make a difference!

22. The conference leader should collect all cards keeping them in the rough categories as indicated by the accompanying placecard. It is wise for the conference leader to take these cards with him for the sole reason of refining the original sort and saving much time for the Steering Committee.

PART III -- THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE (Continued)

An easy way to make the small signs for classifying comments:

Write each of the classifications on the bottom half of a 5 x 8 card, lengthwise. Fold the card, so that it will stand, similar to a placecard.

Most information gathered to date during community conferences has fallen into the classifications listed below. Small signs or placecards may be made in advance for these classifications, then others added if necessary.

Parent/teacher attitudes
- Toward children (or students)
- Toward each other

Student attitudes
- Toward others
- Toward school
- Toward self

Communications
- Community to school
- School to community
- Within the school

Subject matter
Educational practices
Staffing
School operation
Money

Other classifications which have been used:

Discipline, student government, guidance, vocational education, articulation (transition from elementary to high school).

PART IV -- DERIVING THE STATEMENT OF NEEDS

ESTABLISH THE CLIMATE

> *"We are here to make some general statements from the information gathered at the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE. In a sense we are a human-computer group. It is essential that we be objective in handling this information. We will not eliminate any cards or change any ratings because we do not agree with them. We must keep the faith of those who participated.*

CLUSTERING CF COMMENTS

The Steering Committee is divided into work groups of three persons. The cards which were prepared by the participants in the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE are placed upon a table. For the most part the cards will be in the same groupings in which they were originally placed, except for the refinements done by the conference leader.

Each work group selects one of the piles and proceeds to group cards with like comments together. Some cards may have little or no relationship to any of the others and should be set aside. These are *"mavericks."*

Some cards will readily cluster because of the similarity of the comments thereon.

Each work group will have from one to perhaps a dozen sub-groups of cards.

WRITING COMPOSITE STATEMENTS

Upon completion of the sort into sub-groups, each work group will proceed to write a composite needs statement for each of the sub-groups.

Each statement will start with the words, *"There is a need for . . ."*

Extreme caution is to be taken not to distort in any way the meaning or intent of the statements as they were originally written. As questions arise, groups may examine the sign-up sheets and consult Steering Committee members who may have been sitting with the groups which prepared the comment in question.

It is better to have a lot of needs statements than it is to contrive a composite which may not accurately convey the intent of the originators.

PART IV -- DERIVING THE STATEMENT OF NEEDS (Continued)

As composite statements are completed (one to a page), the work group should place in parentheses after the statements a summary of the priority ratings assigned by the originating groups. Example: *There is a need for improvement of food services. (AABCAA)* (This means that six groups commented upon the need for improved food services. Four groups felt that this was of utmost importance, one thought it very important and one thought it moderately important.)

The best gathering device is a folded, 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper. Have the group write the need statement on the outside and place inside the cards which the statement summarizes. Set the packet aside and create another need statement for another sub-group of cards.

It will take from 2 to 3 hours for a group to arrive at this point, depending upon the size of the Steering Committee and the number of comments with which it must work.

The conference leader or his assistant should collect all "mavericks" or single cards. The statements on these cards should be read before the total committee in an attempt to find a home for them. If a place is found for them, the accepting group should add the card's score to cover sheet and judge whether the card's inclusion will make it necessary to modify the needs statement.

ORAL READING AND REGROUPING

Each group is then asked to read one of its need statements. As the statements are read, other groups refer to their own statements and watch for possibilities for combining of statements. Many of these opportunities will arise. Reading should continue until all statements have been read.

When it is obvious that the cards of one or more other groups can be readily clustered with those of the group reading the need statement, the cards and the written need statements should be combined, with the group having the smaller number of original cards for that statement passing its needs statement and the accompanying original cards to the group with a larger number of original cards.

PART IV -- DERIVING THE STATEMENT OF NEEDS (Continued)

Again, extreme care must be taken to avoid distortion of ideas just for the sake of building large composites. As long as good judgment is exercised, the group doing the original reading should be allowed to rule whether another group's need statement is acceptable for combining.

Once the regrouping is accomplished, work groups will then rewrite need statements which have received additional cards and reassign the priority ratings and place them in parentheses after the new statements.

ASSIGNING PRIORITY SCORES

This instruction should be given:

> *"Now, look at your new need statements and if you feel they truly represent the ideas and opinions of the originators, place a score after your composite statements of need as follows:*
>
> *For each A priority give a score of 3 points*
> *For each B give 2 points*
> *For each C give one point*
> *D and E priorities receive no points."*

The example on the preceding page with the *AABCAA* priorities would receive 15 points.

READING OF THE NEED STATEMENTS

The group with the need statement with the highest composite score will read its statement first and announce the score it has received. Groups will watch for any duplications or discrepancies as the reading continues through the entire listing.

As each statement is read, the conference leader should record an abbreviated version of the needs statement with the score on a chalkboard. For example: *"62 vocational education," "46 discipline," etc.*. A running score from high to low should be visible to all.

PART IV -- DERIVING THE STATEMENT OF NEEDS (Continued)

If the Steering Committee agrees that the statements as read do accurately and adequately represent the opinions and ideas of the participants in the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE, the need statements and the accompanying original cards are turned over to the project director for duplication and publication. The committee should agree on a cutoff point, below which statements would receive no further consideration. It is suggested that statements bearing fewer than 5 points be discarded.

PUBLICATION OF THE NEEDS STATEMENT

The project director will rewrite the statements of need by simply listing the statements in order of their priority scores.

The list may then be sent with the goals to all Steering Committee members and to those who participated in the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE.

The Steering Committee will now have worked nearly 3 hours on the processing of information from the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE.

PART V -- WRITING THE STATEMENT OF GOALS

The consultants or conference leader conduct a brief course on school or school district goals for the members of the Steering Committee.

The Fresno County publication, School District Goals, is distributed as a guide. The committee members go over the booklet together.

Any national, state or other applicable educational goals are presented.

CONVERTING NEEDS TO GOALS

Instruction of the Steering Committee is of great importance in order to make sure there is a clear understanding of the definition of a Goal. There is a strong temptation to list solutions as goals. Some of these are bound to appear in the completed goal statement unless this distinction is clearly made. Even so, many goal statements contain solutions stated as goals.

It is important to remember, though, that the entire purpose of the project can be lost in insisting upon purity of statements. The whole idea is to let the board and the staff know what the entire community-school team thinks its schools should be doing. Ideas are more important than form, if a choice must be made.

The final form of the Goal Statement should be left up to the committee. The committee will have had opportunities to see other goal statements and guide itself accordingly.

CONVERTING A NEED TO A GOAL

The work teams of the Steering Committee are maintained. Each team has a number of Needs Statements with accompanying information cards. As an additional means of cross checking, a work team should not have its own Needs Statements. An exchange among the teams should be implemented, such as Groups 1 and 2 switch need packets, etc..

> *"You have just been assigned a number of the Needs Statements which are to be rewritten as goals. You have also received cards on which the comments of the original groups are written. Please examine the Need Statement and the cards which are represented by the statement. Be sure you are satisfied that the Need Statements accurately represents the feelings of the originating groups. Now rewrite the Need as a Goal, keeping in mind the two definitions of Goals..."*

PART V -- WRITING THE STATEMENT OF GOALS (Continued)

From the California School Boards Association:

> A GOAL IS A STATEMENT THAT PROPOSES DESIRED AND VALUED COMPETENCIES, STATES OF BEING, AND/OR GENERAL LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY TO BE ACHIEVED.

From the California State Department of Education:

> A GOAL IS A BROAD DIRECTION, GENERAL PURPOSE OR INTENT. IT IS GENERAL AND TIMELESS AND IS NOT CONCERNED WITH A PARTICULAR ACHIEVEMENT WITHIN A SPECIFIED TIME PERIOD.

A goal has three basic elements:

1. WHO - The school, the faculty, the students, the administration, the School Board, etc..

2. WILL DO WHAT - The broad direction or general purpose.

3. WHY - The intended effect of the WHAT. Example: "....
.... *knowledge of the processes of local government so they may become effective and involved citizens*."

PART V -- WRITING THE STATEMENT OF GOALS (Continued)

SHOULD PRIORITIES BE ASSIGNED TO GOALS?

The Steering Committee will make this decision. If a priority order is desired, the committee may:

1. Use the priority scores originally placed on each of the items, add the totals of all the comments which have been combined; or

2. Return copies of the new Goals Statement to the participants in the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE and request that they place the goals in priority order. This may be accomplished by a card sort, with each of the goals printed upon a card. Participants would then place the cards in priority order, place a rubber band around the packet and return it for tabulation; or

3. Send copies of the Goals Statement to members of the community, or to parents and students, or to staff and the community and students, and request that they place statements in priority order; or

4. Devise another method.

Special attention should be directed to potential goals for the COMMUNITY. Community responsibilities toward the school can also be part of the final Goals Statement. This is desirable and should be given emphasis.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE -- PUBLICATION OF THE GOAL STATEMENT

AFTER COMPLETION OF THE REWRITE:

> *"Now that you have completed rewriting the Needs as Goals, a decision must be made as to what happens to your Goals Statement. Since the project was originated by the school board, the completed product should go back to the board for its consideration. Should the Needs Statements be presented with the Goals? Or, do we present only the goals? It is your decision."*

The board may then do one or more of the following:

1 - Accept and file the report.
2 - Reject the report.
3 - Ask for clarification on one or more statements.
4 - Accept the report and direct the staff to take steps to bring about realization of the goals.
5 - Accept the report with thanks to the participants, discharge the Steering Committee, direct the staff to take steps necessary to bring about realization of the goals.
6 - Take another action.

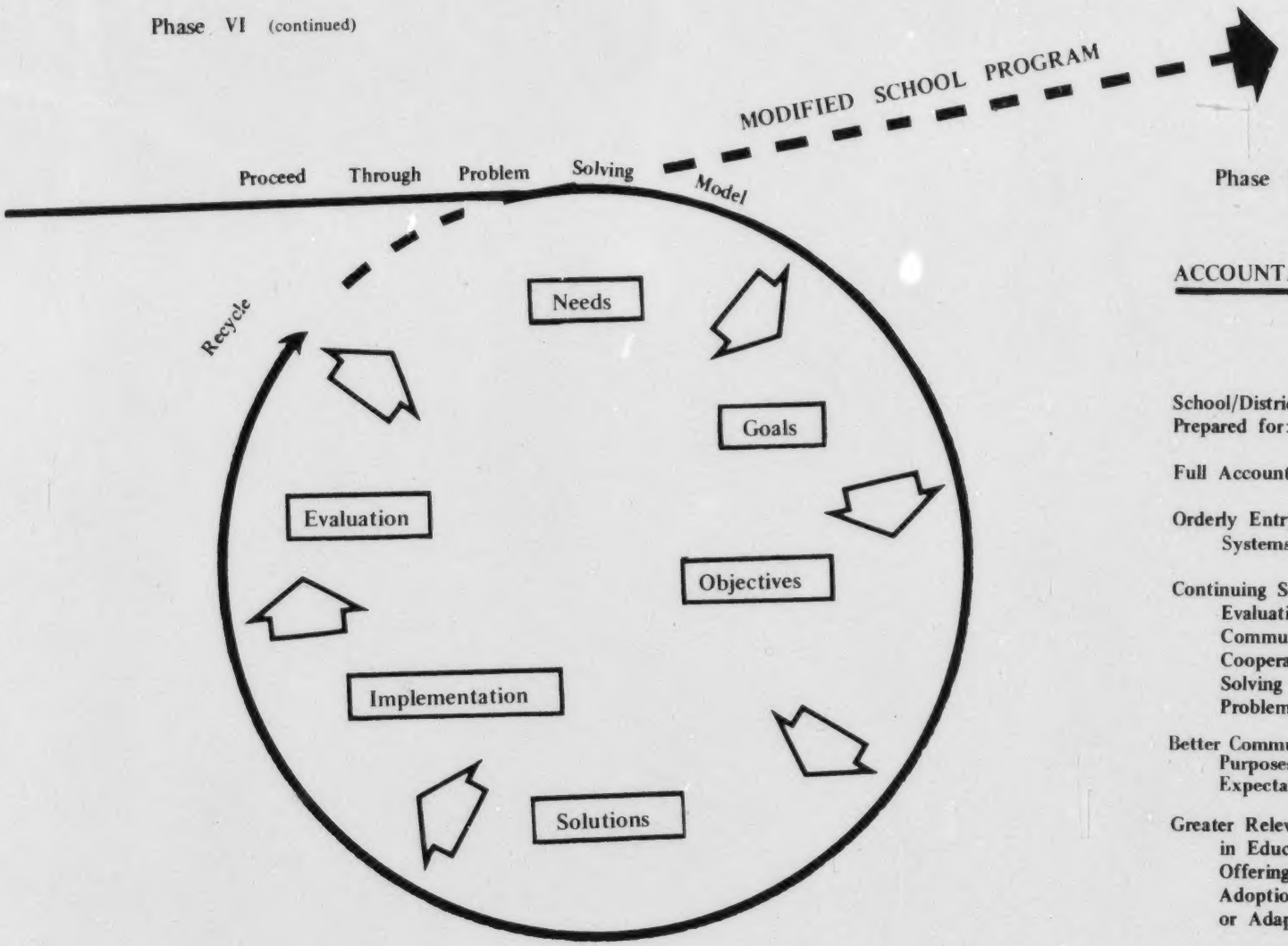
NOW, WHAT HAPPENS?

The door has now been opened to further school-community cooperation in the solution of educational problems of the community. The community has been asked how it feels and has had its say. The community has made a commitment to the school, just as it may have asked the school to make a greater commitment. A partnership has been established where it may not have existed before. To stop here would be tragic.

It is now up to the staff and the Board to do something. Phase VI, the Problem Solving and Resource Allocation Phase, is the next logical step, starting with the writing of program objectives.

It's time for leadership that knows what it's doing, has the courage to take action and the good sense to keep everyone informed.

Phase VI (continued)



ACCOUNTABILITY

School/District now Prepared for:

Full Accountability

Orderly Entry into Systems Management

Continuing Self-Evaluation and Community-School Cooperation in Solving Local Problems

Better Communications about - Purposes of School and Expectations for Learners

Greater Relevance in Educational Offerings thru Adoption of New or Adapted Ideas

Better Education for Children

PART VII -- CONSIDERATIONS FOR MODIFICATIONS IN COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

In the two plus years in which the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE has been used by the members of Fresno County Department of Education with schools, two minor modifications have been suggested by sincere people. The use of these modifications is an option with a school depending upon the openness of communications and the general social climate in the school's attendance area.

The modifications are based on the following portions of the process:

1. Tables are numbered, each table group is asked to place their table number on the butcher paper, the papers are exchanged, and the papers are returned to the table of origination.

   Concern: It is possible for any table to identify the paper with a particular group and being influenced by the makeup of that group.

   Possible Modifications: Allow each table to decide in private what its identifying symbol shall be. They could select a number, the middle initial from each members name, or a graphic symbol such as a flower, four-leaf clover, a moon face, etc.. The initial exchange of papers can be handled by the conference leader by moving the papers from one side of the room to another, or the front to the back and vice versa. Exchanges #2, 3, 4, and 5 can then go clockwise or counter clockwise. When the papers are returned to table of origination, the conference leader calls out the identifying symbol and appropriate table identifies itself.

2. In the exchange of the papers, the major function of each group is to rate each item with an A, B, C, D, or E.

   Concern: People at one table are influenced by the prior ratings that have been placed on the butcher paper by other groups.

   Possible Modification: Use a score or rating sheet upon which the paper symbol is indicated and the group's ratings by statement numbers. A suggested format may be found on page 38. These rating sheets are then collected and the five sheets with the same symbol go to the appropriate table.

Other suggestions have been given to the authors who cannot recommend them. A few of these are listed here as ideas to which the authors hold "Strong Opposition."

1. Use only one question and eliminate the negative question.
2. Use the PTA and advisory committees as your sole source of citizen participation.
3. Use one COMMUNITY CONFERENCE for both elementary and secondary schools.
4. Use one COMMUNITY CONFERENCE for five or more school sites.
5. Establish district goals before determining goals at school sites.

PART VIII -- DISTRICT GOALS FROM SCHOOL GOALS

The question of deriving district goals from the goals established for individual school sites is always raised by administrators and school boards. The Fresno County Model is consistent with the advocacy of the Joint Legislative Committee on this topic. Both of these documents advocate the establishment of goals school by school before becoming concerned about district-level goals. This principle is based upon a number of reasons:

1. Each school has its own uniqueness in terms of student population, staff, problems, and, in some cases, program strategies.

2. In any research project the gathering of data should begin at the lowest level possible. The collation of this data provides the larger picture.

3. Starting with district goals will control the thinking of the participants at the COMMUNITY CONFERENCE for each site.

4. Citizens, staff, and students have a stronger identification with the program of a school site. Very few people have sufficient knowledge about the district as a whole.

As long as not too much time transpires between the first and last COMMUNITY CONFERENCE, the following procedure is recommended for districts with three or more school sites:

1. Depending upon the number of school sites, ask one or two members from each site's Steering Committee to serve on a district-wide Steering Committee.

2. Type all school goals on 3 x 5 cards, one goal per card. At this point don't worry about duplication.

3. Before the first meeting of the district-wide Steering Committee, the staff member in charge should do a rough sort of the goal cards into big categories such as *"discipline," "basic education," "communication," "in-service education," etc.*.

PART VIII -- DISTRICT GOALS FROM SCHOOL GOALS (Continued)

4. At the first meeting of the district Steering Committee divide the group into working teams of three, four, or five.

5. Give each team a bundle of goal cards and ask them to sort into sub-groups.

6. Once sub-goals are established ask them to create a NEW goal statement which would summarize the ideas of each sub-group.

7. When all school goals have been sub-grouped and umbrella statements have been created, start the reading process with one group reading one statement.

8. Ask the total group to listen carefully and critique the umbrella statements, making any modifications which the total group feels necessary.

9. Schedule a second meeting so the group may see the finished product in writing.

10. Publish the rough draft of the umbrella statements with the supporting school goals under each.

11. At the second meeting, each member of the district-wide Steering Committee should have a copy of the above rough draft.

12. Work as a total group and review each umbrella statement one at a time.

13. The staff person in charge should serve as the general recorder and use his copy of the rough draft as the official, amended copy. DO NOT amend any school goals.

PART VIII -- DISTRICT GOALS FROM SCHOOL GOALS (Continued)

14. The staff person should be responsible for seeing that the composite report of umbrella statements is published. The district Steering Committee should give him direction as to whether the supporting SCHOOL goals should be included in the final draft.

15. One or more members of the district Steering Committee should be elected to make the report to the Board of Education through the Superintendent of Schools.

RATING SHEET
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE - FRESNO COUNTY MODEL

Sheet Identification
(number of symbol)

COMMENT NUMBER	Utmost Importance A	Very Important B	Moderately Important C	Of Little Importance D	Not Important E
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
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